



# VIDEO GAMES & OUR CHILDREN

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# INTRODUCTION



Verily all the praises belong to Allāh. We praise Him, we seek His assistance, and we seek His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allāh from the evil of our souls and from the evil of our actions. Whoever Allāh guides, none can misguide him; and whoever is misguided, there is no guide for him. I bear witness that nothing has the right to be worshipped except for Allāh, alone, without partners; and I bear witness that Muḥammad ﷺ is His slave and His Messenger.

As to what follows; verily the most truthful speech is the Book of Allāh, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad ﷺ. The most evil of affairs are newly invented matters, and every newly invented matter is an innovation, and every innovation is astray, and straying is in the Fire.

Our conversation today is concerning our children and electronic games. Why was this topic selected? There are several reasons.

Firstly, as it is witnessed and known to everyone, electronic games have become widespread such that they have become part of our

children's daily lives. Rather, these games have altered their disposition. Thus, they have abandoned going outside to play as we were accustomed to doing previously. Now, they withdraw from people and isolate themselves with these devices.

Back in the day, where did the people play? They would play in the streets and at playgrounds next to the homes. They would go outside to play and go with their parents to swim and hunt. They would go to the mountainous areas and other places.

Since these games have become widespread, the nature of people's amusement has changed. Now, there is in the pocket of every child an electronic device storing these games. Whenever they want to enjoy it, they pull it out, even if they are in the masjid. We have witnessed some people playing with their devices while the Imām is on the pulpit delivering the Friday sermon. Some people drive their cars with these devices in their hands. These games are not limited to the youth; rather, this includes the adults who have become well advanced in age.

Another reason we chose this topic is the negative effects resulting from these games. Electronic games can have positive effects. However, they also have negative effects on the religion, health, soul, wealth, and studies of those who play them. Unfortunately, we find parents and educators heedless, or pretending to be heedless, about these negative effects. Therefore, there must be increased awareness about this topic.

# THE RECREATION OF THE SALAF

Perhaps someone might say, “You obedient Muslims wage war against everything. Everything is impermissible to you all. You have even made games impermissible. Doesn’t Islām have ease? Isn’t there an opportunity for relaxation for the soul?”

We say, “Of course!” Our Islāmic legislation has come with moderation and balance in everything, even in the issue of recreation. Relax, but do so with permissible means.

The intent behind relaxation for the soul, and the permissibility of games, is to energize the soul for the obedience of Allāh ﷻ. This intent, meaning the worship of Allāh, is the reason Allāh created you. Allāh ﷻ did not create you for play.

﴿ أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ ﴾

Did you think that We had created you in play, and that you would not be brought back to Us?

[Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn 23:115]

Allāh did not create you in jest. He created you to worship Him.

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴾

**And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.**

**[Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt 51:56]**

On the Day of Judgment, our Lord ﷻ will take you to account based upon this intent and purpose.

The first question we will be asked on the Day of Judgment is concerning the prayer. You will be asked about your life.

The Prophet ﷺ said,

لا تزول قدم ابن آدم يوم القيامة من عند ربه حتى يسأل عن خمس : عن عمره فيم أفناه ، وعن شبابه فيم أبلاه ، وماله من أين اكتسبه وفيم أنفقه ، وماذا عمل فيما علم

**The son of Adam will not be dismissed from before his Lord on the Day of Resurrection until he has been questioned about five things: his life and how he spent it, his youth and how he used it, his wealth and how he earned and disposed of it, and how he acted upon what he acquired of knowledge.<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Narrated by at-Tirmidhī 2422; classed as ḥasan by al-Albanī in Ṣaḥīḥ at-Tirmidhī 1969



Therefore, where is the question about play? Your purpose for existence is to actualize the worship of Allāh ﷻ. Despite this, the Islāmic legislation, which is the legislation of ease and moderation, pays attention to the soul and its love for relaxation.

We find Salman al-Fārisi saying to 'Abū Dardā', "O 'Abū Dardā', Your Lord has a right over you, your body has a right over you, and your wife has a right over you. So, give each one their due right.<sup>2</sup>

Ḥanthala said to the Prophet ﷺ, "O Messenger of Allāh, when we are in your company, we are reminded of Hellfire and Paradise as if we are seeing them with our own eyes. However, whenever we go away from you and attend to our wives, children, and business, much of these things go out of our minds. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ إِنْ لَوْ تَدُومُونَ عَلَى مَا تَكُونُونَ عِنْدِي وَفِي الذِّكْرِ لَصَافَحْتُكُمْ الْمَلَائِكَةُ عَلَى  
فُرُشِكُمْ وَفِي طُرُقِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يَا حَنْظَلَةَ سَاعَةً وَسَاعَةً

By Him in Whose Hand is my soul, if your state of mind remains the same as it is in my presence and you are always busy in remembrance of Allāh, the angels will shake hands with you in your

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<sup>2</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 6139

beds and in your paths; but, Ḥanthala, there is a time for this and a time for that.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, relaxation and play exist in the Islāmic legislation so the soul does not become bored and abandon actions.

If we ask the question, “Did the companions play?” The answer is yes. They had games particular to their era.

'Anas, the servant of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ had the best disposition amongst people. He sent me on an errand one day, and I said that by Allāh I would not go. I had, however, this idea in my mind that I would do as the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ had commanded me to do. I went out until I happened to come across children who had been playing in the street. In the meanwhile, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ came there and caught me by the back of my neck from behind me. As I looked toward him, I found him smiling, and he said:

يَا أُنَيْسُ أَذْهَبْتَ حَيْثُ أَمَرْتُكَ ؟ قَالَ قُلْتُ : نَعَمْ ، أَنَا أَذْهَبُ ، يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ

'Unais, did you go where I commanded you to go?' I said, 'Messenger of Allāh, yes, I am going.'<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2750

<sup>4</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2310

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The evidence taken from this *ḥadīth* is his statement, “I went out until I happened to come across children who had been playing in the street.”

'Anas said,

أَتَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى غُلَّامَانِ يَلْعَبُونَ فَسَلَّمَ عَلَيْهِمَا

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ passed by some children who were playing; thus, he greeted them with salām.<sup>5</sup>

'Anas ibn Mālīk said, “The Prophet ﷺ used to visit Umm Sulaym and she would present something specially prepared for him. I had a younger brother called 'Abū 'Umayr. He had a sparrow with which he played, but it died. So, one day the Prophet ﷺ came to see him and saw him grieved. He asked, ‘Why is he sorrowed?’ The people replied, ‘His sparrow has died.’ He ﷺ then said:

يَا أَبَا عُمَيْرٍ مَا فَعَلَ النُّعَيْرُ

'Abū 'Umayr! What has happened to the little sparrow?’”<sup>6</sup>

The Prophet ﷺ joked with him and asked about the bird he used to play with.

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<sup>5</sup> Sunan 'Abī Dāwūd 5202

<sup>6</sup> Sunan 'Abī Dāwūd 4969

‘Ā’ishah said, “I got engaged to the Messenger of Allāh. We went to Medina and stayed at the home of Banī al-Ḥārith bin Khazraj. Umm Rūmān came to me while I was playing on a swing with some of my girlfriends.”<sup>7</sup>

The swings that you are familiar with, ‘Ā’ishah ﷺ used to play on these swings when she was young.

‘Ā’ishah ﷺ used to play with dolls in the presence of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.

أَنَّهَا كَانَتْ تَلْعَبُ بِالْبَنَاتِ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَتْ وَكَانَتْ تَأْتِينِي صَوَاجِبِي فَكُنَّ يَنْقِمْنَ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَتْ فَكَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُسَرِّبُهُنَّ إِلَيَّ

She used to play with dolls in the presence of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ; and when her playmates came to her, they left the house because they felt shy of in front of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. However, it was the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ who sent them to her.<sup>8</sup>

It is mentioned in Adab al-Mufrad by Imām al-Bukhārī that ‘Ibrāhīm ibn Yazīd an-Nakh‘ī said, “Our companions used to allow us playing of all types.” Bukhārī said, “Meaning, they allowed the children to play, except for playing with dogs.”

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<sup>7</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 3894

<sup>8</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2440

This is proof that playing existed during the time of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. This is because it is the nature of children and the youth to incline toward playing. However, the pious predecessors would pay attention to the games their children played. They would take full advantage of the talents possessed by the children according to their ages.

Ar-Rubī‘ bint Mu‘awadh said,

أَرْسَلَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ غَدَاةَ عَاشُورَاءَ إِلَى قُرَى الْأَنْصَارِ

The Prophet ﷺ sent a messenger to the village of the ‘*Anṣār*’ in the morning of the day of ‘*Āshūrā*’.

**Explanation:** ‘*Āshūrā*’ is the 10th of Muḥarram. There is a reward for fasting this day. The Prophet ﷺ said,

صِيَامُ يَوْمِ عَاشُورَاءَ إِنِّي أُحْتَسِبُ عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يُكَفِّرَ السَّنَةَ الَّتِي قَبْلَهُ

Fast the day of ‘*Āshūrā*’, for indeed I anticipate that Allāh will forgive (the sins of) the year before it.<sup>9</sup>

Ar-Rubī‘ bint Mu‘awadh said,

أَرْسَلَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ غَدَاةَ عَاشُورَاءَ إِلَى قُرَى الْأَنْصَارِ " مَنْ أَصْبَحَ مُفْطِرًا فَلَيْتَمَ بَقِيَّةَ يَوْمِهِ، وَمَنْ أَصْبَحَ صَائِمًا فَلَيْتَمَ

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<sup>9</sup> Jami‘ at-Tirmidhī 752

The Prophet ﷺ sent a messenger to the village of the 'Anṣār in the morning of the day of 'Āshūrā to announce, 'Whoever has eaten something should complete the remainder of the day fasting, and whoever is observing the fast should continue fasting.'"

فَكُنَّا نَصُومُهُ بَعْدَ، وَنُصَوِّمُ صِبْيَانَنَا

Since then, we used to fast on that day regularly, and we made our children fast.

**Explanation:** They made the young children fast so they would get used to it and learn how to fast.

Ar-Rubī' bint Mu'awadh said,

وَنَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ اللَّعْبَةَ مِنَ الْعِهْنِ، فَإِذَا بَكَى أَحَدُهُمْ عَلَى الطَّعَامِ أَعْطَيْنَاهُ ذَلِكَ، حَتَّى يَكُونَ عِنْدَ  
الْإِفْطَارِ

We used to make toys of wool for them; and if any one of them cried for food, he was given those toys until it was the time of the breaking of the fast.<sup>10</sup>

In the wording collected in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, she said,

وَنَصْنَعُ لَهُمُ اللَّعْبَةَ مِنَ الْعِهْنِ فَتَذْهَبُ بِهِ مَعَنَا فَإِذَا سَأَلُونَا الطَّعَامَ أَعْطَيْنَاهُمُ اللَّعْبَةَ تُلْهِيهِمْ حَتَّى  
يَتِمُّوا صَوْمَهُمْ

<sup>10</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 1960

We used to make toys out of wool and take them (to the masjid) along with us. When they asked us for food, we gave them these toys to play with, and this distracted them until they completed their fast.<sup>11</sup>

Why would they give them toys? They gave them toys to encourage them to fast. As you know, young children—six or seven years of age—become hungry quickly, and they need to eat. Their mothers have told them to fast. So, if they start to cry, they are given toys to quiet them. Therefore, in this case, the toy has achieved the intended purpose which is to cultivate the child upon worship.

Another example of this is baby dolls. ‘Ā'ishah ؓ said,

قَدِمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْ غَزْوَةِ تَبُوكَ أَوْ حَيِّبَرٍ وَفِي سَهْوَتِهَا سِتْرٌ فَهَبَّتْ رِيحٌ فَكَشَفَتْ نَاحِيَةَ السِّتْرِ عَنْ بَنَاتٍ لِعَائِشَةَ لُعِبَ فَقَالَ مَا هَذَا يَا عَائِشَةُ . قَالَتْ بَنَاتِ

When the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ arrived after the expedition to Tabuk or Khaybar (the narrator is not certain which battle it was), the wind raised an end of a curtain which was hung in front of her store-room, revealing some dolls which belonged to her. He asked, “What is this?” She replied, “My daughters.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1136

<sup>12</sup> Sunan 'Abī Dāwūd 4932

We know that 'Ā'ishah ؓ did not have any children. But her kunya was Umm 'Abdullāh. She asked the Prophet ﷺ to give her a kunya, and he called her Umm 'Abdullāh. Who is the mother of 'Abdullāh? The mother of 'Abdullāh is 'Asmā', the sister of 'Ā'ishah. The father of 'Ā'ishah and 'Asmā' is 'Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddiq ؓ.

Therefore, 'Ā'ishah did not have any children, but she had these toys she used to play with. The Prophet ﷺ said, "O 'Ā'ishah, what are these?" She replied, "They are my daughters."

'Ā'ishah ؓ said,

وَرَأَى بَيْنَهُنَّ فَرَسًا لَهُ جَنَاحَانِ مِنْ رِقَاعٍ فَقَالَ " مَا هَذَا الَّذِي أَرَى وَسَطُهُنَّ " . قَالَتْ فَرَسٌ . قَالَ " وَمَا هَذَا الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ " . قَالَتْ جَنَاحَانِ . قَالَ " فَرَسٌ لَهُ جَنَاحَانِ " . قَالَتْ أَمَا سَمِعْتَ أَنَّ لِسُلَيْمَانَ خَيْلًا لَهَا أَجْنَحَةٌ قَالَتْ فَضَحِكَ حَتَّى رَأَيْتُ نَوَاجِدَهُ

Among them, he saw a horse with wings made of rags and asked, "What is this I see among them?" She replied, "A horse." He asked, "What is this that it has on it?" She replied, "Two wings." He asked, "A horse with two wings?" She replied, "Have you not heard that Sulaymān had horses with wings?" She said, thereupon the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ laughed such that I could see his molar teeth.<sup>13</sup>

What is the benefit of girls playing with baby dolls? Imām an-Nawawī said in his explanation of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim that al-Qāḍī said,

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<sup>13</sup> Sunan 'Abī Dāwūd 4932



“This *ḥadīth* proves the permissibility of playing with them (dolls), and they are exempted from the prohibited images. It gives the women practice from a young age as to how to take care of themselves, their homes, and their children.

When a young woman plays with these baby dolls made of wood or cotton, it prepares her to take care of her children in the future. Therefore, in this case, the toys achieved the intended goal and they accomplished the purpose.

When the children became a little older, the pious predecessors would pay attention to the games they played. They would have them play games that would benefit them.

'Abū 'Umāmah ibn Sahl said,

كَتَبَ عُمَرُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ إِلَى أَبِي عُبَيْدَةَ بْنِ الْجَرَّاحِ أَنْ عَلِّمُوا غِلْمَانَكُمْ الْعَوْمَ وَمُقَاتِلَتَكُمْ الرَّمْيَ

'Umar wrote to 'Abū 'Ubaidah bin al-Jarrāḥ, [saying], “Teach your children swimming and teach your fighters archery.”<sup>14</sup>

Ibn al-Qayyim mentioned in his book *Al-Furūsiyah*, that Muṣ'ab ibn S'ad said, “This means to teach your children archery; for indeed, it is the best game for you.

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<sup>14</sup> Musnad Aḥmad 323

What is archery an indication of? It is an indication of strength.

When Allāh ﷻ sent down the verse:

﴿وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ﴾

**And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and steeds of war.**

[Sūrah Al-'Anfāl 8:60]

When this verse was sent down, what did the Prophet ﷺ say? He said,

وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ أَلَا إِنَّ الْقُوَّةَ الرَّمْيُ أَلَا إِنَّ الْقُوَّةَ الرَّمْيُ

**Prepare to meet them with as much strength as you can. Indeed, strength is archery. Indeed, strength is archery. Indeed, strength is archery<sup>15</sup>.**

Sometimes before a battle, the companions who were under the age of eighteen would come to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and present themselves to participate in the upcoming battle. Some of them were fifteen or fourteen, but they wanted to join the army and fight alongside the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. He would look at their strength, size, and endurance. If he deemed them fit, he would allow them to join; if not, he would reject them.

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<sup>15</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1917

Samurah ibn Jundub was from those who formed an alliance with the *'Anṣār*. His father died, leaving him and his mother without anyone to care for them. His mother was known for her beauty. When she arrived in Madinah, several men proposed to her. She said she would only marry a man who would take care of her son. Thus, she married a man name Murā ibn Sinān. Samurah went with his stepfather to participate in the Battle of Uḥud, but Samurah was turned away because he was deemed too small; while another young boy name Rāfi' ibn Khadīj was allowed to fight. Samurah said to his stepfather, Murā, "O my dear father, Rāfi' ibn Khadīj was allowed to fight but I am a better wrestler than him." Murā went to the Prophet peace be upon him and said, "O Messenger of Allāh, you rejected my son but Rāfi' ibn Khadīj was permitted to fight, and my son is a better wrestler than him." The Prophet ﷺ said to Rāfi' and Samurah, "Wrestle one another." So Samurah defeated Rāfi' and was allowed to participate in the battle.

The sport of wrestling existed during the time of the Prophet ﷺ, but it was not the wrestling which we see widespread on television today. Wrestling is a person grappling with another, trying to throw him to the ground.

Ibn 'Umar ؓ asked permission from the Prophet ﷺ to participate in the Battle of Badr when he was fourteen, but he was deemed too young. He sought permission to fight in the Battle of Uḥud, but he was again deemed too young. He sought permission to fight in the

Battle of the Trench and was granted permission. He was fifteen years old during that battle.

Today, a fifteen-year-old is perhaps in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Can you imagine someone entering battle at the age of fifteen? Why did the Prophet ﷺ allow him to join? He allowed him to join because he saw strength within him. Where did this strength come from? Who taught him? They learned from the games they used to play. They learned from their upbringing. They used to see their fathers in adversity, with strength and steadfastness; and they were counting on them.

Today, someone in the 10th grade is considered a teenager. They will say, he is just a teenager. Sometimes his father will hire a driver to take him back and forth and look after him.

The children of the pious predecessors were the result of their parents selecting the correct games for them, which uplifted their morale and led to them having strong and healthy bodies.

# MODERN VIDEO GAMES



Today, the scales are different. There has emerged amongst us that which is known as electronic games; or video games like PlayStation, Xbox, Nintendo, and things which you know better than me. The youth do not have a monopoly on these games; rather, the adults play them as well. There was a surge in children clinging to these games after the emergence of what are today called smart devices—smart phones, and tablets such as the iPad and the like.

These games have received acceptance from our young children and teenagers because they have attractive colors and three- and four-dimensional images called 3D and 4D. These images are mixed with sound. Together, they are extremely attractive and hold attention, especially the attention of children during the early stages of development.

Many people think the goal of these games is merely entertainment. The reality is, although these games have some positive aspects spoken about by psychology specialists, unfortunately, the negatives results are numerous.

Each game has a subliminal message of which the player may be unaware. It is a message speaking directly to you, the player. Today, they are called educational games. We have positive games that some schools use for educational purposes. They are games, but they teach. There are also negative educational games. These games include media that contain messages designed for a specific purpose. The game designer places these messages within the games to achieve a particular goal, be it cultural, political, or religious.

When playing games that contain characters, the player takes on the persona of these characters. He is transported into the environment of the character. Consequently, the player takes on some of the characteristics and traits of the game characters, and they are suspended between fantasy and reality.

Immediately after finishing the game, you may see the boy trying to apply some behaviors from the game within the home, upon his brothers, sisters, or friends. Today, we have what is known as cyberbullying and hostility, much of which comes as a result of these games.

Previously, there was a cartoon called Captain Tsubasa.<sup>16</sup> The episodes would come on after ‘Aşr prayer. The kids would sit and watch Captain Tsubasa as he played soccer. When the episode was over, what would the kids do? Immediately after the episode, they would go outside and play. They would try to emulate his soccer moves, although it was all make-believe and fantasy. The same thing happens with video games.

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<sup>16</sup> Translator’s note: Captain Tsubasa is a Japanese manga series, originally created in 1981. The series mainly revolves around the sport of soccer focusing on the main character Tsubasa Oozora.

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# VIDEO GAME ADDICTION

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These electronic games influence the children, but do they also influence the adults? The answer is yes. They have an enormous effect on adults. In fact, the World Health Organization recently classified video game addiction as a gaming disorder. Video game addiction is regarded as a mental health problem, and gaming is regarded as an addiction.<sup>17</sup>

Can someone be addicted to video games? The answer is yes. Some people sit and play games for five hours. Not long ago, a woman came to me, a wife complaining about her husband. Her husband is

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<sup>17</sup> The World Health Organization stated, "Gaming disorder is defined in the 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) as a pattern of gaming behavior ("digital-gaming" or "video-gaming") characterized by impaired control over gaming, increasing priority given to gaming over other activities to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other interests and daily activities, and continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences.

in his thirties. He sits and plays PlayStation for 20 hours. He quit work. He does not go to his job and he does not pray. His wife said to him, “O so and so, you have neglected us by playing this game. Either you pay attention to me and my kids or divorce me.” She said, “I swear by Allāh, he did not even look at me. He continued to play his game and said, ‘You are divorced,’ and he kept playing the game.” This is addiction.

Some psychiatrists have linked cocaine and drug addiction to game addiction. Before, I used to say to myself, how can anyone be addicted to video games? How can anyone be addicted to video games like he is addicted to drugs? There are similarities between video game addiction and drug addiction.

- You will see the video game addict vigorously seeking his game just as a drug addict vigorously seeks after drugs. Some fathers have taken the video games and hid them in the house. The gamer will search for the game until he finds it, and he cannot find relaxation until he takes hold of his game.
- The gamer does not feel comfortable, or that he is in a normal state, unless he is playing or watching his video games. This is like the drug abuser. He does not feel relaxed until after he takes his drugs.
- Another similar characteristic is the desire to continue and increase the dosage. You will see the child—boy or girl—playing the game and they want to continue playing, even

at the expense of other priorities such as prayer, honoring their parents, or studying. Their main goal is to complete the game. This is exactly like the drug abuser.

- The video game addict also resembles the drug addict while he is playing his game. You will see the person addicted to PlayStation, and other video games, isolated with his door locked. He will sit by himself and play for long hours. He will be a loner, isolated from the people just like the drug addict. Despite his isolation, he feels pleasure, enjoyment, and imaginary happiness.
- Another manner in which the video game addict resembles the drug addict is that if he is away from his game, he will develop headaches, agitation, and become angry quickly. This is the case of the drug abuser if he cannot get a hold of his drugs.
- This year in Britain, they opened the first free government-sponsored video game addiction rehabilitation center. What does this prove? This proves that these games have taken a dangerous turn and it is no longer entertainment. These games, which were intended for rest and relaxation, have taken an extremely dangerous turn for the worst.

### First: Religious Effects of Video Games

These video games have an effect on the religion of the child.

## **Neglecting Worship**

Firstly, it causes him to neglect the prayer times, especially due to staying up all night playing. Some of them stay up all night until the time for Fajr. They go to the masjid to pray. Then they go to sleep after Fajr and sleep until 'Aṣr time. Consequently, they neglect Ḍuhr and 'Aṣr prayer, especially during vacation time. This is the result of staying up all night playing games. Likewise, these games distract the child from performing the religious obligations due upon him such as honoring his parents, keeping the ties of kinship, and other duties. These games also instill in the hearts of our children militant ideologies, extremism, terrorism, and the love of bloodshed.

## **Teaching Violence**

If we ask the questions, what are the games that appeal to most people and children? What types of games are they? The answer is adventure games. Adventure games have mass appeal and are extremely popular; and fighting games, which are called action games, that contain fighting and killing.

Which is more detrimental in your view, that the child is watching killing on television or that he plays a game that contains killing? Which will have more effect upon the child, pretend killing or watching it? Killing on video games will have a greater effect. If you watch a movie or television show and you see a man kill

someone, this action may have an effect. But on the game, you are the one who grabs the pistol, you are the one who points it at your adversary, you are the one who shoots him. Then you see the blood stain on the screen.

Some of these devices have extremely realistic images. Once, I saw a special gaming device, a computer device that cost more than fifteen thousand *dirham* (\$4,000).<sup>18</sup> I asked the seller why it costs so much? He said, “It is specifically for playing 3D games. You live in virtual reality.” Meaning, it is as if you were taking a weapon and killing this person, and it looks like a real human being. It allows you to live the life of real criminal activity. You morph into this character. Shedding blood becomes natural and easy for you, as if it is just a game. And this is intentional.

Whoever has a PlayStation in his home sees his kid playing. He observes how he plays. It is as though you are cultivating a son who specializes in terrorism and bloodshed.

Unfortunately, some people will say, “O brother, we have seen the centers for Qur’ān memorization produce terrorists, and some university graduates have revolutionary ideologies, and some people who read the *Book of Tawhīd* come to us with revolutionary ideas.

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<sup>18</sup> Translator’s note: As of 2020, one of the most expensive gaming PC was priced at \$30,000.

I say, O my noble brother, do you not think these video games and what is incorporated in them—that we give our children—are from the main mechanisms that teach and instill in them revolutionary thought and terrorism? The answer is, of course. We are the ones who give it to your children. If our child graduates from high school or passes his grade in middle school, we gift them with a PlayStation.

### **Bad Companionship**

Another way these video games negatively affect the religion of our children is through bad companionship. Before, when a child would go outside to play on a team with his friends, you knew exactly who he was playing with. If there was a bad child among his group, you would tell him to beware of so and so. Today, we have online gaming. You see your son sitting with headphones over his ears. He speaks into a microphone while wearing headphones. Who is he talking to? Do you know who he is talking to? You do not know. The child himself, does not know who he is talking to. Who are they? What is their methodology? What is their religion? What are their tendencies? You do not know. This is dangerous upon your child's religion, methodology, and character. Who is behind these online games?

Some mothers and fathers say, “All praises belong to Allāh, our child is quiet, he does not give us any problems. His mother watches what he does. His father watches what he does. Before, he

would go outside and play far away from the house, but now Allāh has protected him in the house. He sits and plays beneficial games.” It is as though they are feeding him venom on a gold platter.

### **Effect Upon Religious Beliefs**

I will give you some examples. A specialist in the field psychology said to me, “We did a study on video games in this country. We found something that no one pays attention to unless he reflects upon the matter deeply. The gamer stands with a pistol in his hand. The weapon is for killing the enemy and the location is an abandoned house. The enemy exits the door. The gamer points his weapon at him to kill him, and shoots him with bullets. He strikes the enemy—who looks like a menacing monster—so the shelf above the monster falls, and above the shelf is a written copy of the Qur’ān.”

Someone might ask, “What is the problem? He pointed the weapon at the monster, the enemy. He did not point it at the written copy of the Qur’ān.”

The answer is more psychological than realistic, and it is the attachment these games have to the human psyche called the subconscious. The idea is to connect striking the enemy to the copy of the Qur’ān that fell. So, you are diligent to strike the enemy in front of you, and consequently knock down the copy of the Qur’ān along with the enemy by way of your strike. Thus, the status of the

Qur'ān is negatively affected and shaken within your heart without you perceiving it. This is from a game present with us in this country.

Why would they put a copy of the Qur'ān on the enemy you wish to kill, except that they desire to associate the Qur'ān with this enemy in order to weaken the status of the Qur'ān within you.

## **Second: Psychological Effects of Video Games**

### **Isolation**

Gameboy, and other video games, affect the gamer by way of isolation. For this reason, you will find the gamer locking his door and sitting for long hours playing alone. He does not want anyone to join him. This is known as social withdraw or social isolation. He doesn't want to mix with his peers, friends, or family. You will find that he becomes angry extremely fast if his father or mother tells him to do a chore. He will become angry, upset, and tense. He will become rebellious with his parents, and especially with the way he deals with his siblings.

### **Depression**

Video game addiction may cause depression which leads to suicide. Is this possible? The answer is yes. Some specialists in psychiatry

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mention that video games are supervised by knowledgeable psychiatrists who know what colors and sounds affect the psyche. They know the frequencies that affect the mind. In their terminology, it is called cerebral dominance.

The gamer enters the game on the first level and the game may have 50 levels or more. He must complete specific tasks on each level, and he cannot move to the next level without doing so. You may have to harm yourself; but because they are controlling you, you feel joy and pleasure from doing so. One gamer said, "On one of the levels of the game, I was ordered to engrave a drawing on my hand with a knife until bloodshed." He then took a picture of it and sent it to the game supervisor in order to move on to the next level. He did this until it led to his depression. He sees the world as a gloomy place. There is no good for him in remaining alive. Then, they command him to commit suicide and he does so.

Video games can lead to suicide and this has become widespread. Those who like to blind follow will ask, "It is really possible for video games to lead to suicide?" The answer is yes because depression is a disease. I asked a psychiatrist a few days ago if depression can lead someone to kill themselves without giving it any thought. He said, "Yes, and this is from the consequences of video game addiction."

### **Third: Physical Effects of Video Games**

Excessive gaming can lead the gamer to become overweight and obese because he is sitting down and not moving. Obesity leads to other diseases, such as diabetes and enlarged thyroid. Excessive gaming causes weak vision, neck pain, lethargy, and laziness in the muscles. Excessive gaming causes cerebral vasospasm as known as epileptic seizures, which is due to the presence of high electrical charges within the brain. It can also cause insomnia, especially if the gamer plays before going to bed. This could also lead to nightmares.

One addiction that is extremely detrimental to health is known as digital addiction (an impulse control disorder that involves the obsessive use of mobile devices, the internet, or video games). This is a new type of addiction. As they sit wearing headphones, frequencies radiate in the ears. The effect these frequencies have upon the brain is just like the effect of drug use upon the brain.

### **Fourth: Educational Effects of Video Games**

As a result of video game addiction, excessive play, and preoccupation with video games, academic scores decrease and concentration skills decline; such that the child develops Attention Deficit

Disorder. Likewise, their ability to comprehend, remember, and recollect will decline.

### Fifth: How Video Games Affect Character

Some video games open by showing semi-naked women. These games introduce alcohol and drug use into the game. Some of them use foul language such as insults and curse words.

### Sixth: How Video Games Affect security

#### Spyware

On September 13, 2018, there was an article in *Al-Bayan* newspaper entitled, “Dubai Police Warn of Video Games Containing Spyware.” These electronic games contain spyware that enters your laptop or computer. It can extract all your pictures and contacts. It can extract your family files and perhaps even your father’s job information without you realizing it.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Translator’s note: Michael Kan from *PCMag* stated, “An ad-tracking tool embedded in dozens of games can ‘fingerprint’ your PC, prompting spyware concerns. Some developers have pledged to remove the tool from their products.”

## **Cyber Extortion**

Cyber extortion is another major problem. Cyber extortion is the act of cyber-criminals demanding payment using threats of some form of malicious activity against a victim, such as data compromise or denial of service. They will demand you do something illegal if you desire to continue playing, or that you show them something illicit.

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Data collected includes IP address, the operating system, in-game user ID, and browser version number, which is sent to the marketing tool’s provider, Red Shell, for processing. (*Spyware? PC Game Marketing Tool Triggers Privacy Backlash*, June 18, 2018)

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# TREATMENT FOR VIDEO GAME ADDICTION

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Firstly, we must place strong religious motivation in our children. Unfortunately, some guardians believe giving the kids a PlayStation, iPad, iPhone, and Galaxy as entertainment is like a prize, so they can be happy and be like their peers and friends. So, they give their children these devices without setting any ground rules and without safeguarding them with a proper fortress. How can I safeguard my children?

The Prophet ﷺ taught ibn ‘Abbās while ibn ‘Abbās was a young child riding behind him.

يَا غُلَامُ إِنِّي أُعَلِّمُكَ كَلِمَاتٍ اخْفِظِ اللَّهَ يَحْفَظْكَ اللَّهُ تَجِدْهُ تُجَاهَكَ إِذَا سَأَلْتَ فَاسْأَلِ اللَّهَ وَإِذَا  
اسْتَعْنَيْتَ فَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ الْأُمَّةَ لَوِ اجْتَمَعَتْ عَلَى أَنْ يَنْفَعُوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَمْ يَنْفَعُوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ  
قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ لَكَ وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا عَلَى أَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَمْ يَضُرُّوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ  
رُفِعَتِ الْأَقْلَامُ وَجَفَّتِ الصُّحُفُ

O boy, I will teach you some words. Be mindful of Allāh and He will protect you. Be mindful of Allāh and you will find Him before you. When you ask, ask Allāh, and when you seek aid, seek Allāh's aid. Know that if the entire creation were to gather together to do something to benefit you, you would never get any benefit except that which Allāh had written for you. And if they were to gather to do something to harm you, you would never be harmed except by that which Allāh had written for you. The pens are lifted, and the pages are dried.<sup>20</sup>

Today, this is called safety with regard to religious creed and ideology. This is for the parents to cultivate their children with the correct religious creed, to cultivate their children upon Islāmic monotheism, and to cultivate their children upon the correct religion, upon the correct principles.

My noble brothers, today the world has become, as they say, as one village. We import cultures from the West. We are importing culture from places that deny the existence of Allāh ﷻ. That which was constant has now become unstable. There are those who want us to re-evaluate our religious creed. The goal of all of this is to target our religion. They are targeting our religious creed, given to us in the Book of our Lord ﷻ and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.

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<sup>20</sup> Jami' at-Tirmidhī

Some people say this religion is ancestral so it must be revised. They say we must revise our belief in Allāh, the angels, the Messengers, and the Day of Judgment. They believe these beliefs are ancient. How do you expect to raise your child with all these things around him intending to destroy his religious creed, which is found in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ?

Firstly, protect yourself and your family. Sit with your children. Teach them and listen to them. Answer their questions. Teach them, “My Lord is Allāh, my religion is Islām, my Prophet is Muḥammad ﷺ.” Who is the Lord of all that exists? He is Allāh. Allāh is the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. He is the Creator, the Provider. He is the One who gives life and causes death. Teach your sons, your wife, your daughters, about their Lord. The best thing that teaches them about their Lord is the Noble Qur’ān.

﴿قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ﴾

Say, “He is Allāh, [who is] One, Allāh is as-Samad. He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him.

[Sūrah Al-‘Ikhlāṣ 112:1-4]

If you ask a father, who is a university graduate, “What is the meaning of Allāh is as-Samad?”, he will not know! So how can you

cultivate you children while you do not even know the Attribute of your Lord ﷻ?

As-Samad is the One with perfection in His Lordship and sovereignty. As-Samad is the One Whom all creatures turn to for their needs, while He is not in need of any of them. He is the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of all existence, the One who is perfect in all His Attributes, and He has no need of anything from His creation, while of all His creation is in need of Him.

Make firm within your children the correct religious creed and protect them by way of this, and you will find your children will reject all foreign ideologies by the permission of Allāh ﷻ.

Secondly, observe and watch over your family. If your child plays video games, and indeed we have been tested with this, then it is a must that you watch over your child. What games is he playing? What games is he going to purchase? Some games have age-restrictions written on the cover, such as, "This game is for 18 and older," or "This game is for twelve and older." Do not purchase games haphazardly. Before you purchase games, ask about them. Look for age restrictions. Look to see if it contains anything that opposes the Islāmic legislation.

Thirdly, do not leave your child in a room alone playing video games. Have him play in a room where the entire family can see him. If your child is online gaming, who is he playing with? If you



do not know who he is playing with, then close the game right in his face. You would not allow your son to leave the house with a man you did not know, so how can you allow him to play with hundreds of people you do not know? This is how you observe your children. You also observe them by limiting their game time. Allow them to play from this time until that time; perhaps for half an hour or an hour, especially during the school year. During the school year have them only play on the weekend due to their studies. Limit playing time to a couple of hours. This is how you watch your children.

Some of us give our young children smartphones, such as the iPhone, Galaxy, and other well-known brands. These phones have games on them. Check yourself. Does your child deserve this phone at his age or not? Would you give your six-month-old child meat to eat? He would not be able to chew it. He would die. You have a three or four-year-old child and you give him a smartphone with Wi-Fi in the house! What type of websites will he enter? What type of things will he see on these websites? You know full well that searching on the internet is like searching in the ocean, and the explorer might drown.

Another cure is to keep your children busy. Keep your children busy with beneficial things. Teach your child how to swim. Enroll him in clubs that teach children beneficial sports. If playing soccer does not interfere with his worship, there is no problem with

playing. If he wants to train in a specific sport that is beneficial for him and his body, then let him play. Keep them busy with beneficial matters.

Keep them busy with Qur'ān memorization. Keep them busy by taking them with you. Take your sons with you when you go to the store. Teach them how to behave around men. Teach them how to behave in the marketplace. Teach them how to interact with people.

### **Parents Distracted with Their Phones**

Likewise, another remedy is for the mother and father to avoid being busy on their phones in front of the children. You, father, are an example. You, mother, are an example. Regrettably, many families complain about this. The mother and father are sitting with their children around them while everyone is holding a device in their hands. Some families say, "Although we are sitting in one room together, we communicate via a What's App group." This is from the biggest mistakes that destroy the value of family communication. When your children see you busy with your phone like this, what are they going to do? They are going to imitate you.

Do not associate rewards with games. It is a mistake to say to your child, "If you pass your grade, I will buy you a PlayStation." Give them rewards that will benefit them.

### **Avoid Gaming Before Bed**

Before your children go to sleep, busy them with activities that will benefit them such as reciting the Noble Qur'ān, Storytime, or listening to a beneficial lecture. Distance them from social media sites that will encourage them to play these games.

If you find your child is suffering from gaming addiction, do not hesitate to take him to competent physicians who treat these types of disorders.



# GUARD YOUR TIME

This topic is extremely broad, and I have only mentioned a summary. It is particularly important that we respect our time. Allāh ﷻ swore by the time in the Noble Qur'ān. Allāh ﷻ said,



**By the time**

**[Sūrah Al-ʿAṣr 103:1]**

Allāh ﷻ only swears by matters that are great. He swore by the time in general, and He swore by the time specifically. Time is the most precious thing you possess. If all the kings of the world united, bringing all the wealth in the world in order to return one minute that passed by, they would not be able to do so. The most precious thing we own is our time. So what is the condition of the person who spends seclusion with his video games, while he neglects the Noble Qur'ān, the prayer, the Sunnah prayers, and the other

obligatory acts of worship? We must instill within our children the love for utilizing their time with beneficial things.

I ask Allāh the Great, the Lord of the Mighty Throne, to grant us all success in what He loves and is pleased with, and to benefit us from what we have heard. I ask Allāh ﷻ to make it easy for us to cultivate our children, and ourselves. Allāh ﷻ said,

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ﴾

**O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones, over which are [appointed] angels, harsh and severe. They do not disobey Allāh in what He commands them but they do what they are commanded.**

**[Sūrah At-Tahrim 66:6]**



# VIDEO GAMES & OUR CHILDREN

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This very timely book covers various aspects of video games and their effects upon the individual, family, and community. Topics discussed in this book include :

- Recreation of the Companions during childhood and adolescence
- Video game addiction and drug addiction similarities
- Subliminal messages in video games
- The effects of video games upon the religion
- The effects of video games upon mental health
- The effects of video games upon physical health
- The effects of video games on security
- Video game addiction in adults
- Treatment for gaming disorders

And much more.

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